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(54) **APPARATUS INCLUDING LOAD DRIVEN BY A MOTOR COUPLED TO AN ALTERNATOR**

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E21B 47/18 (2012.01)
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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **E21B 4/04** (2013.01); **E21B 41/0085** (2013.01); **E21B 47/18** (2013.01); **H02P 25/30** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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USPC 166/66.4, 66.6, 250.01, 177.1, 373; 175/57, 104, 40
See application file for complete search history.

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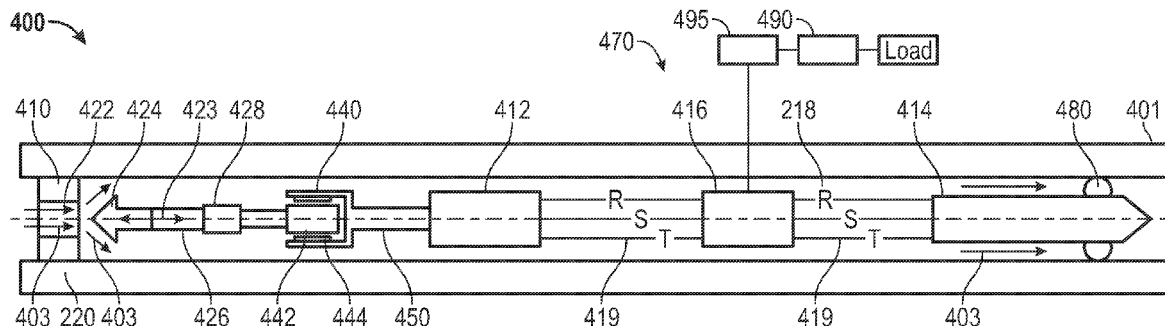
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus for use in a wellbore is described. The apparatus includes a load, a motor coupled to the load to provide mechanical power to the load and an alternator directly coupled to the motor driving the motor. The apparatus further includes a switch between the alternator and the motor that in a first position connects the alternator to the motor in a first configuration that rotates the motor in the clockwise direction and in a second configuration that rotates the motor in the counterclockwise direction.

21 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



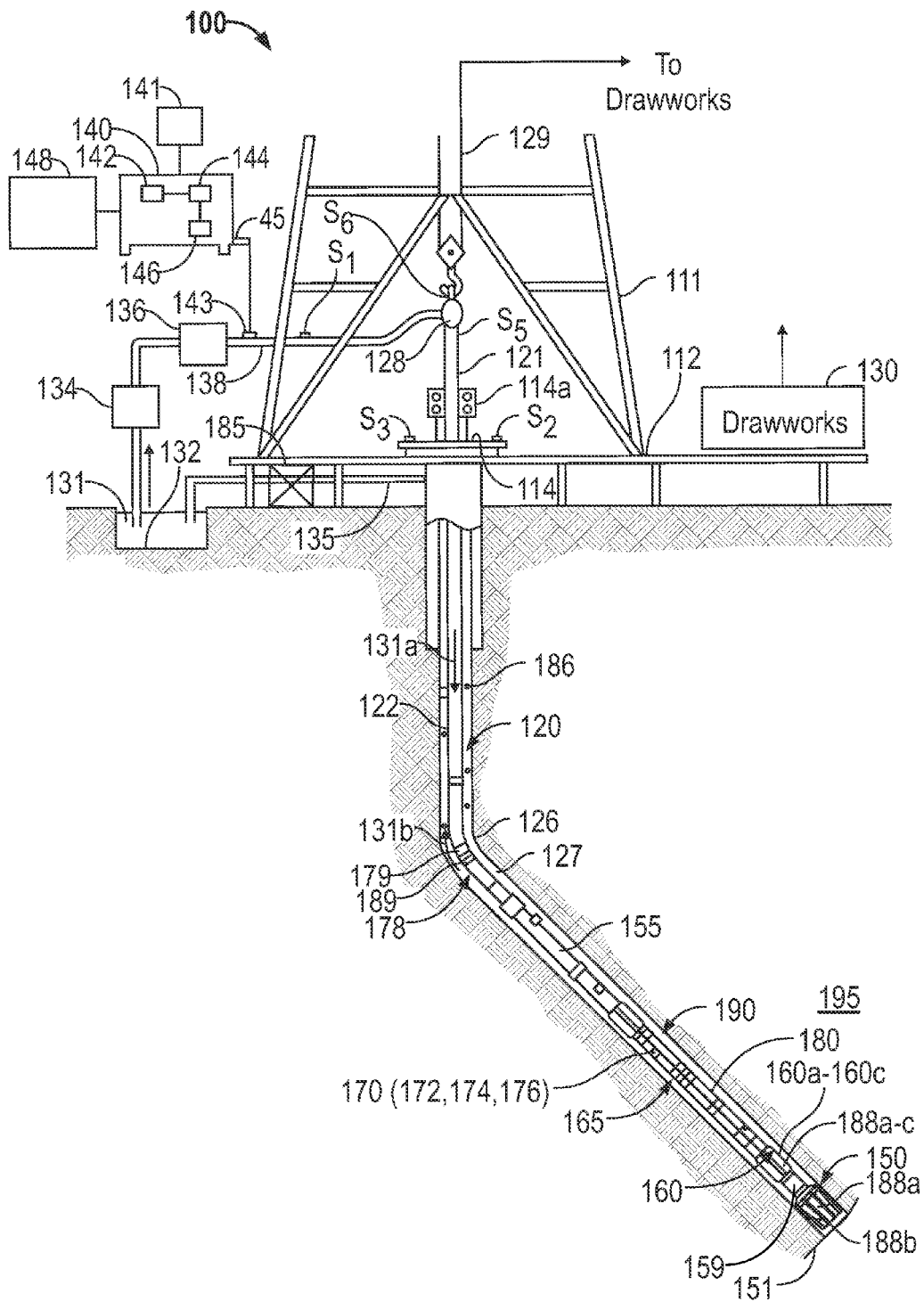


FIG. 1

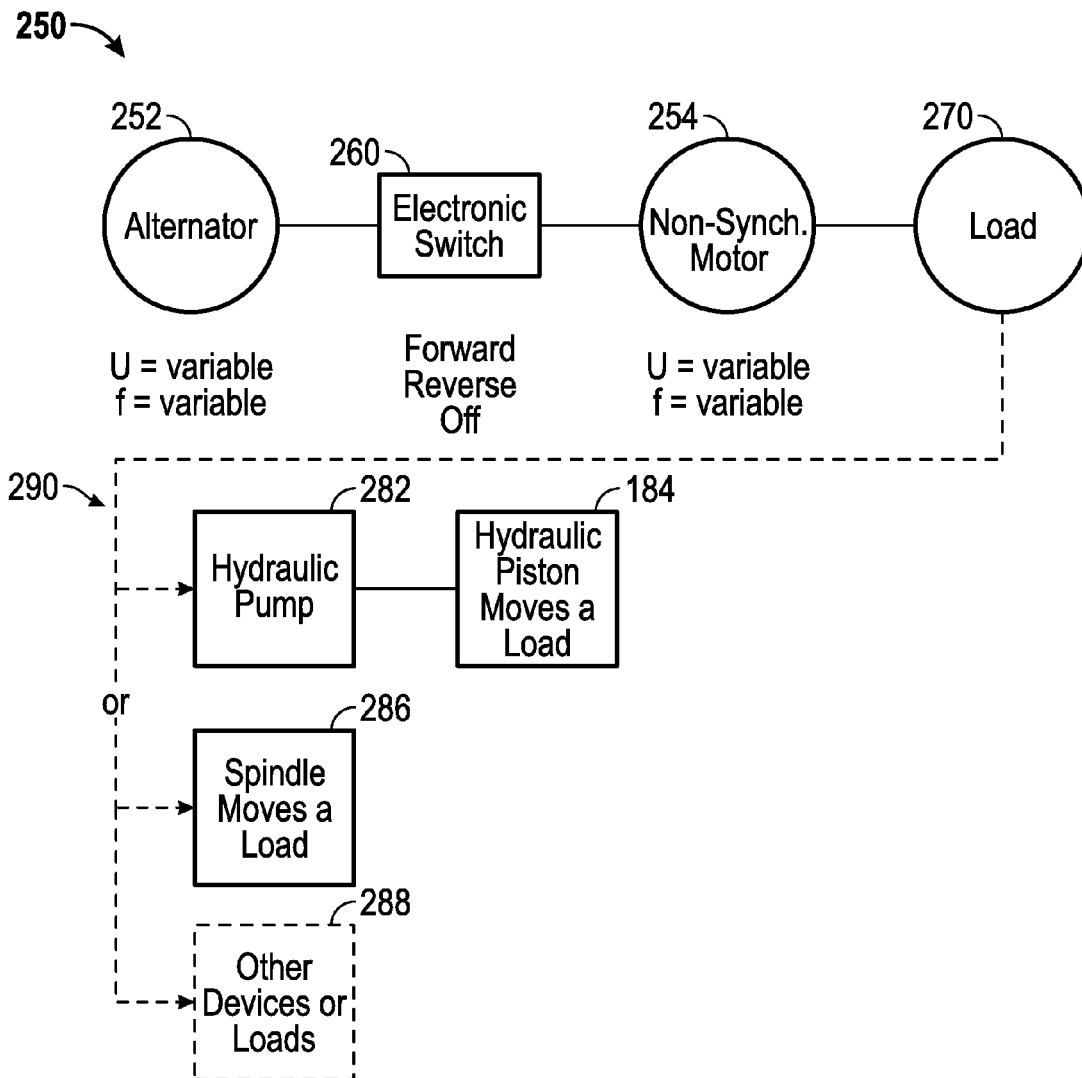


FIG. 2

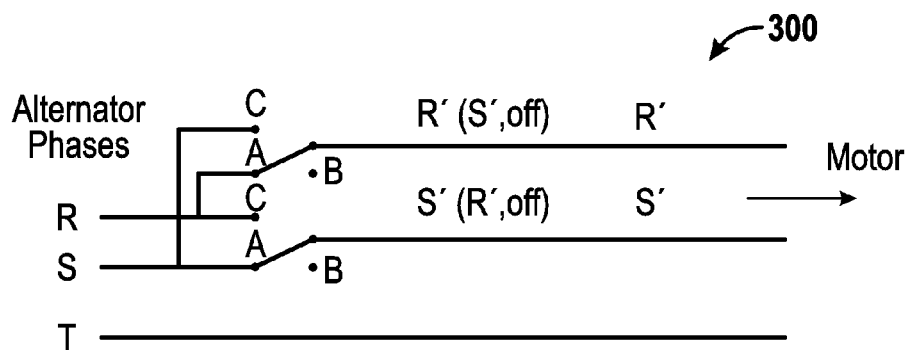


FIG. 3

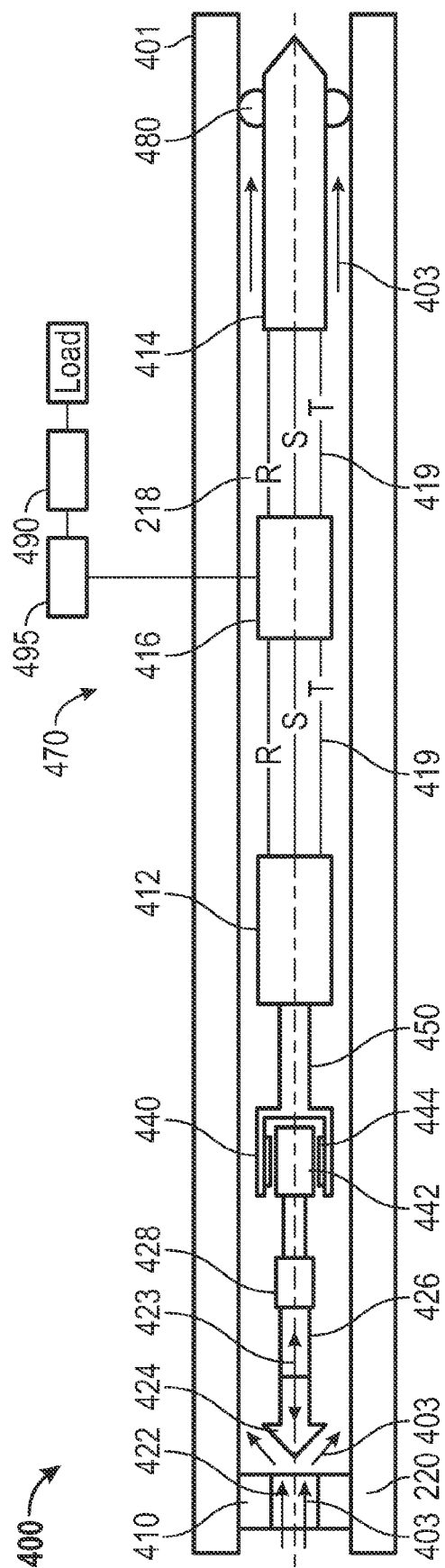


FIG. 4

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APPARATUS INCLUDING LOAD DRIVEN BY A MOTOR COUPLED TO AN ALTERNATOR

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Disclosure

This disclosure relates generally to downhole loads operated by directly coupled alternator motor units.

2. Background of the Art

Wellbores for production of hydrocarbons are drilled using a drill string that includes a drilling assembly (also referred to as a "bottomhole assembly") attached to a bottom end of a tubular. A drill bit is attached to the bottom end of the BHA. The drill bit is rotated by rotating the drill string and/or by a mud motor in the BHA to drill the wellbore. The BHA may include various devices that are operated by electrical motors. The wellbore temperature can exceed 200 degrees. At high temperatures, the effort on the electronic side of the electrical motors is very high to control the speed and the position of a motor drive. However it is not always necessary to precisely control the speed and/or position of the motor drive.

The disclosure herein provides apparatus having a power unit that includes an electrical motor driven by a substantially directly coupled alternator that includes relatively minimal or no electronics.

SUMMARY

In one aspect, an apparatus for use in a wellbore is provided that in one embodiment includes a load, a motor coupled to the load to provide electrical power to the load and an alternator directly coupled to the motor driving the motor. In one aspect, the apparatus further includes a switch between the alternator and the motor that in a first position connects the alternator to the motor in a first configuration that rotates the motor in the clockwise direction and in a second configuration that rotates the motor in the counterclockwise direction.

In another aspect, a method for operating a device is provided that in one embodiment includes providing the device to be operated, coupling an electrical motor to the device to operate the device, and providing electrical power to the motor from an alternator directly coupled to the motor. A switch may be provided between the alternator and the motor to enable the motor to rotate in the clockwise and anticlockwise directions.

The disclosure provides examples of various features of the apparatus and methods disclosed herein that are summarized rather broadly in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood. There are, of course, additional features of the apparatus and method disclosed hereinafter that will form the subject of the claims appended hereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The disclosure herein is best understood with reference to the accompanying figures in which like numerals have generally been assigned to like elements and in which:

FIG. 1 is an elevation view of a drilling system including energy conversion devices, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is block diagram showing a motor directly coupled to an alternator driving a load, according to an embodiment of the disclosure; and

FIG. 3 is an exemplary switch for turning on and off the motor shown in FIG. 2; and

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FIG. 4 is a line diagram of an exemplary downhole device driven by the motor shown in FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary drilling system **100** that includes a drill string having a drilling assembly attached to its bottom end that includes a steering unit according to one embodiment of the disclosure. FIG. 1 shows a drill string **120** that includes a drilling assembly or bottomhole assembly ("BHA") **190** conveyed in a borehole **126**. The drilling system **100** includes a conventional derrick **111** erected on a platform or floor **112** that supports a rotary table **114** that is rotated by a prime mover, such as an electric motor (not shown), at a desired rotational speed. A tubing (such as jointed drill pipe) **122**, having the drilling assembly **190** attached at its bottom end, extends from the surface to the bottom **151** of the borehole **126**. A drill bit **150**, attached to drilling assembly **190**, disintegrates the geological formations when it is rotated to drill the borehole **126**. The drill string **120** is coupled to a draw works **130** via a Kelly joint **121**, swivel **128** and line **129** through a pulley. Draw works **130** is operated to control the weight on bit ("WOB"). The drill string **120** may also be rotated by a top drive (not shown) rather than the prime mover and the rotary table **114**. The operation of the draw works **130** is known in the art and is thus not described in detail herein.

In an aspect, a suitable drilling fluid **131** (also referred to as "mud") from a source **132** thereof, such as a mud pit, is circulated under pressure through the drill string **120** by a mud pump **134**. The drilling fluid **131** passes from the mud pump **134** into the drill string **120** via a desurger **136** and the fluid line **138**. The drilling fluid **131a** from the drilling tubular discharges at the borehole bottom **151** through openings in the drill bit **150**. The returning drilling fluid **131b** circulates uphole through the annular space **127** between the drill string **120** and the borehole **126** and returns to the mud pit **132** via a return line **135** and drill cutting screen **185** that removes the drill cuttings **186** from the returning drilling fluid **131b**. A sensor S_1 in line **138** provides information about the fluid flow rate. A surface torque sensor S_2 and a sensor S_3 associated with the drill string **120** provide information about the torque and the rotational speed of the drill string **120**. Rate of penetration of the drill string **120** may be determined from the sensor S_5 , while the sensor S_6 may provide the hook load of the drill string **120**.

In some applications, the drill bit **150** is rotated by rotating the drill pipe **122**. However, in other applications, a downhole motor **155** (mud motor) disposed in the drilling assembly **190** also rotates the drill bit **150**. The rate of penetration ("ROP") for a given drill bit and BHA largely depends on the WOB or the thrust force on the drill bit **150** and its rotational speed.

A surface control unit or controller **140** receives signals from the downhole sensors and devices via a sensor **143** placed in the fluid line **138** and signals from sensors S_1 - S_6 and other sensors used in the system **100** and processes such signals according to programmed instructions provided by a program to the surface control unit **140**. The surface control unit **140** displays desired drilling parameters and other information on a display/monitor **142** that is utilized by an operator to control the drilling operations. The surface control unit **140** may be a computer-based unit that may include a processor **142** (such as a microprocessor), a storage device **144**, such as a solid-state memory, tape or hard disc, and one or more computer programs **146** in the storage device **144** that are accessible to the processor **142** for executing instructions

contained in such programs. The surface control unit **140** may further communicate with a remote control unit **148**. The surface control unit **140** may process data relating to the drilling operations, data from the sensors and devices on the surface, data received from downhole and may control one or more operations of the downhole and surface devices.

The drilling assembly **190** may also contain formation evaluation sensors or devices (also referred to as measurement-while-drilling, "MWD," or logging-while-drilling, "LWD," sensors) determining resistivity, density, porosity, permeability, acoustic properties, nuclear-magnetic resonance properties, corrosive properties of the fluids or formation downhole, salt or saline content, and other selected properties of the formation **195** surrounding the drilling assembly **190**. Such sensors are generally known in the art and for convenience are generally denoted herein by numeral **165**. The drilling assembly **190** may further include a variety of other sensors and communication devices **159** for controlling and/or determining one or more functions and properties of the drilling assembly (such as velocity, vibration, bending moment, acceleration, oscillations, whirl, stick-slip, etc.) and drilling operating parameters, such as weight-on-bit, fluid flow rate, pressure, temperature, rate of penetration, azimuth, tool face, drill bit rotation, etc. A controller **170** in the drilling assembly **190** may be provided to control various downhole operations and process sensor data. The controller may include a processor, such as a microprocessor **172**, a data storage device **174**, such as a solid-state memory, and programmed instructions **176**.

Still referring to FIG. 1, the drill string **120** further includes energy conversion device and a telemetry device **178**. Energy conversion device **178** is located in the drill string **120** tubular and provides power to the various devices and sensors in the drilling assembly. In the drilling assembly **190**, a number of devices may utilize electric motors to operate such devices (each such device also is referred to herein as a "load"). Such devices include, but are not limited to: a telemetry device that uses a poppet-type valve or an oscillating valve for generating pressure pulses, wherein the motor drives a spindle or turns a spindle to open and close the valve; and a motor that drives a pump that provides a fluid under pressure to a force application member to cause the drill bit to turn toward a selected direction. In high temperature wellbores, the burden on the electronics is very high to control the speed and the position of the motor. The disclosure herein provides motors driven by alternators with minimal or no electrical circuits for driving the loads. For example, a power unit **189** containing a motor according an embodiment of this disclosure may be used to drive the telemetry unit **178**. Similarly separate motors **188a-188c** made according to an embodiment of this disclosure may drive hydraulic pumps used for supplying fluid to pistons to drive the force application members **160a-160c**. Exemplary loads driven by an alternator-motor combination made according to an embodiment of this disclosure are described in reference to FIGS. 2 and 3.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing a power device **250** that includes an alternator-motor combination made according to one embodiment of the disclosure for driving exemplary loads **290** in a drilling assembly. The device **250** includes an alternator **252** that provides electrical power to an electric motor **254**. The motor **254** drives a load **270**. In one embodiment, the motor **254** is an asynchronous motor. An asynchronous motor has the operating characteristic that when the motor is: not driving a load, it operates at a first higher rotational speed and a first torque; and when it is driving the load, it operates at a second lower rotational speed and a second torque. In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. 2, the alternator

252 is connected to the motor **254** via an electronic switch **260**. In another embodiment, the alternator **252** may be directly connected to the motor **254**.

FIG. 3 shows an exemplary switch **300** for use in the device **250**. Switch **300** includes operating positions A, B, and C and three electrical conductors or lines R, S, T connected to the phases of the alternator **254** (FIG. 2) (also referred to herein as the "input side") and three conductors or lines R', S' and T to the phases of motor **254** (also referred to as the "output side.") When the switch **300** is in position A, line R of a first phase of the alternator connects to a line R' of the motor **254** first phase and line S of the second phase of the alternator **252** connects to line S' of the motor second phase. In this configuration, the motor **254** rotates in a first direction, for example clockwise. When the switch **300** is in position B, the alternator **252** is disconnected from the motor **254**. When the switch **300** is in position C, line R of the first phase of the alternator connects to a line S' of the motor **254** second phase and line S of the second phase of the alternator **252** connects to line R' of the motor first phase. In this configuration, the motor **254** rotates in a second direction (opposite to the first direction), i.e., counterclockwise.

Referring back to FIG. 2, the load **270** may be any suitable device. For example, the load may be a hydraulic device, such as a hydraulic pump **282** that supplies a fluid under pressure to a piston **284** that moves a device or member, such as a force application member **160a-160c** described in reference to FIG. 1. The load **270** may be a mechanical device, such as a spindle **286** that drives or operate a device, such as a valve. Other loads **288** may be operated by the motor **254**. An example of a spindle-type device operated by the motor **270** is described in reference to FIG. 4.

FIG. 4 shows a device **400** that includes a fluid driven valve **410** operated by a power device **470** made according to an embodiment of the disclosure. The device **400** is shown placed in a drill collar **401** of a bottom hole assembly, such as the bottomhole assembly **190** shown in FIG. 1. The valve **410** includes an opening **422** through which a drilling fluid **403** flows. The valve **405** further includes a poppet or cone **424** that moves back and forth, as shown by arrows **423**. The valve **410** is closed and opened by blocking and unblocking the flow of the fluid **403** through the opening **422** of the valve **410**. The cone **424** is connected to an end of a spindle **426**. A motor **412** turns a screw member **450** (drive member) that drives a spindle drive **428** that drives the cone **424** back and forth. A clutch **440** may be connected between the motor **412** and the spindle drive **428** to selectively engage the drive member **450** to and disengage the drive member **450** from the spindle drive **428**. In an embodiment, the clutch **440** may be a slipping clutch, such as a hysteresis clutch that includes a permanent magnet section **442** and a hysteresis material **444**. The slipping clutch could be implemented in addition to another clutch that is selectively engaged. An alternator **414** provides electrical power to the motor **412** via a switch **416** as shown and described in reference to FIGS. 2 and 3. Wires **419** connect the alternator and motor phases as described in reference to FIG. 3. In aspects, the alternator **414** may be driven by a turbine **480** driven by the drilling fluid **403** flowing through the valve **410**. To close the valve **410**, the switch **416** is placed in a first position, such as position A shown in FIG. 3, to cause the motor **412** to turn in a first direction to move the member **450** forward (toward the fluid opening **422**). The cone **424** moves forward and blocks, at least partially, the fluid **403** from passing through the opening **422**, thereby producing a pressure pulse. To open the valve **410**, the switch **416** is placed in a second position, such as position C shown in FIG. 3. This causes the motor **412** to reverse the rotational

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direction, causing the spindle 426 to move backward, i.e., away from the fluid opening. The reverse movement could be caused by the force of the drilling fluid alone when the motor is shut off. In one embodiment, the motor 412 may be directly connected to the spindle drive, wherein the switch 416 is configured to toggle at selected time intervals to cause the valve to open and close at a selected frequency. In another embodiment, the switch may be controlled by circuit in response to programmed instruction or in response to a parameter, such as a parameter relating to the load or another event. The end position of the valve cone may be determined from the force of the drilling fluid or from the turns of the motor as that relates to the linear motion of the rod 450. In another aspect, If the alternator and motor combination is used to drive a hydraulic pump to move a piston to drive a force application member, the switch may be moved to the on, off or neutral position based on the force applied by the force application member or the linear motion of the piston. An appropriate sensor 490, such as a linear motion sensor, force sensor and the like may be coupled to the load for providing measurement relating to the selected parameter. The sensor measurements may be processed by a controller 495. The controller 495 also may be configured to operate the switch 416 in response to the parameter measured by the sensor 490.

The alternator-motor combination disclosed herein can operate over a wide speed range of the alternator. In aspects, the alternator may be a three phase brushless permanent magnet alternator. The alternator is connected via a relatively simple electronics with a three phase motor, which may be an asynchronous motor or a synchronous permanent magnet motor. In aspects, the electronics may merely include a switching device when the EMF (ElectroMotive Force) of the alternator is adjusted or matched to the EMF of the Motor. In this configuration, the following operating conditions are possible: (1) off; (2) forward; and (3) backward, especially when an asynchronous or induction motor is used. In one aspect, the end position of the drive may be a mechanical stop, in which case the motor can still be powered in this position. The alternator and the motor can be designed so that they will not burn in this position. Also, a slipping clutch can prevent the alternator and the motor from getting overloaded.

The foregoing disclosure is directed to certain embodiments. Various changes and modifications to such embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art. It is intended that all changes and modifications that are within the scope and spirit of the appended claims be embraced by the disclosure herein.

The invention claimed is:

1. An apparatus for use in a wellbore, comprising:
a load;

a motor coupled to the load to provide mechanical energy to the load;

a switch directly coupled to the motor; and

an alternator directly coupled to the switch and no other electrical circuits, the switch configured to selectively connect phases of the alternator to phases of the motor and the alternator configured to drive the motor with a first configuration of the switch that causes the motor to rotate in a clockwise direction and with a second configuration of the switch that causes the motor to turn in a counterclockwise direction.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a clutch between the load and the motor configured to couple and uncouple the motor to the load in response to occurrence of an event.

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3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the event includes a member of the load coming to mechanical stop or a force applied by the member of the load reaching a selected value.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a sensor configured to provide measurements relating to a selected parameter of the load and a controller configured to control operation of the switch in response to the selected parameter.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the load includes a member that moves linearly to open and close the valve and wherein the motor moves the member back and forth to open and close the valve.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the load includes a pump configured to supply a fluid under pressure to a member and wherein the motor operates the pump.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the alternator is operated by a hydraulically-operated device.

8. A method of operating a device, comprising:

providing the device;

coupling a motor to the device to operate the device;

connecting a switch directly to the motor; and

providing electrical power to the motor from an alternator directly coupled to the switch and no other electrical circuits, wherein the switch selectively connects phases of the alternator to phases of the motor, and the switch, in a first position, connects the alternator to the motor to provide electrical power to rotate the motor in clockwise direction and, in a second position, provides power to the motor to rotate in anticlockwise direction.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising providing a clutch between the device and the motor that couples and uncouples the motor to the device in response to occurrence of an event.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the event is a member of the device coming to mechanical stop or a force applied by the member of the device reaching a selected value.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising providing a sensor configured to provide measurements relating to a selected parameter of the device and a controller configured to control an operation of the switch in response to the selected parameter.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the device includes a member that moves linearly to open and close a valve and wherein the motor moves the member back and forth to open and close the valve.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein the device includes a pump configured to supply a fluid under pressure to a member and wherein the motor operates the pump.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein the alternator is operated by a hydraulically-operated device.

15. A drilling system including a drilling assembly having an electrically-driven load, comprising:

a motor coupled to the load to provide mechanical energy to the load;

an alternator directly coupled to a switch and no other electrical circuits and coupled, through the switch, to the motor, the alternator driving the motor; and

the switch directly coupled to both the alternator and the motor to selectively connect phases of the alternator to the phases of the motor in two configurations to rotate the motor in two respective directions.

16. The drilling system of claim 15, wherein the load is one of: a hydraulic unit; and a mechanical unit.

17. The drilling system of claim 16 further comprising a clutch between the load and the motor configured to couple and decouple the motor to the load in response to occurrence of an event.

18. The drilling system of claim 17, wherein the event occurs when a member of the load comes to a mechanical stop or when a force applied by a member of the load reaches a selected value.

19. The drilling system of claim 15 further comprising a 5
sensor configured to provide measurements relating to a selected parameter of the load and a controller configured to control operation of the switch in response to the selected parameter.

20. The drilling system of claim 15, wherein the load 10
includes a member that moves linearly to open and close the valve and wherein the motor moves the member back and forth to open and close the valve.

21. The drilling system of claim 15, wherein the motor is selected from a group consisting of: a linear induction motor; 15
and a linear synchronous motor.

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